

War—in 1898. There in that hotel, you will see pictures of the celebrities of the time: Marilyn Monroe, Stan Musial, Rocky Marciano. When you walk through, you see the people that I will say lived in black-and-white fame in America. Their pictures are on the wall in the Hotel Nacional. Also, there in the parking lot was the 1959 Jaguar station wagon that was the vehicle of the previous dictator, Batista's, wife, who had that green 1959 Jaguar station wagon.

But things have stopped. They are frozen in time. The most typical taxicab in Havana was a 1954 Chevy, and it had a 3-cylinder Russian diesel engine under the hood. If you look around the island, you would see Russian tractors that were parked, and they had been stripped for parts. I didn't see any of them out there running. It is the only place in civilization that I know that once went from animal husbandry agriculture where they used beasts of burden to till the fields to Russian tractors when the Russians were subsidizing the Cubans, and then when the Soviet Union imploded, Mr. Speaker; and that ended Christmas Day 1991, when the Soviet Union went under and was no more. Over a period of time their subsidy for the island of Cuba dried up.

They were subsidizing Cubans this way. Cubans then were producing sugar. The open market on sugar was 6 cents a pound. The Russians were sending them oil for sugar, making a trade. The sugar that was going to Russia was costing the Russians 51 cents worth of oil. So you have a more than eight times multiplier effect sugar for oil, and that profit that was in there was what was propping up the failed, failed, failed economy of Cuba.

The Soviet Union imploded. That subsidy ended, and those Russian tractors broke down and finally died. So you end up with brahma oxen that are out there doing the tillage in the field. They would tie them on a piece of rope, and they would have what I called a pivot grazing system rather than a pivot irrigation system. I happened to plow behind a team of brahma oxen out there just kind of for sport. He was out in the field working. I asked him: Can I take a round? So I got to do that and got a picture of that, Mr. Speaker. That island had regressed so much that the tractors were parked and the animals had been put back to work.

Hugo Chavez decided he would prop up the Cuban island with the wealth of his oil. Of course, when Chavez himself went to his Maker, thankfully, and the prosperity that Venezuela enjoyed collapsed around the failed ideology of a Marxist-controlled economy, that then shut down the subsidy for Cuba.

Who should come along to save the day?

Barack Obama, who decided he is going to open up trade with Cuba, establish an embassy there, and let American dollars come down into Cuba so the island could become prosperous again.

We needed to let the Marxist regime finally be starved out. That was the purpose of the sanctions against Cuba, and that is why it has never been wise to open up free trade with Cuba. Now it is wise for this incoming Trump administration to promote regime change in Cuba. Raul can't last much longer. Freedom must come to the Cuban people, and I want to swim ashore at the Bay of Pigs and walk out on a free Cuba. I have done that at GTMO, but I want to do that at the Bay of Pigs, Mr. Speaker.

Another way that Cuba was propped up would be any foreign currency that came in—tourists could come into Cuba, and they would come into Cuba especially from Europe. They would go to the beaches at Varadero and other places, and so they spent their euros there. Americans would sneak into Cuba by going through the Bahamas and get their passport punched out there and take a separate flight and fly into Cuba. They might also come in through the south or come in through Mexico, but American dollars came down.

Now, here is the rule: we think we are helping Cubans by doing business with Cuba with American dollars. Here is how it was when I was there—and I don't think it is any different today—the exchange rate of the Cuban peso to the dollar was 21 pesos to the dollar. Cubans could earn American dollars, they could hold American dollars, but they can't spend American dollars unless they go to a Cuban bank where they have to take their American dollar, lay that down on the counter and get an exchange for Cuban currency. But the Cuban currency doesn't give them 21 pesos, which is the exchange rate for their American dollar. It gives them one peso for the American dollar, and 20 pesos go into Castro's bank account to prop up Cuba.

That is how he is raking the vigorish out of those transactions that are there. Or they could go into a Dollar Store where their dollar would only get them a peso. That is how that money went back into the hands of Castro. He is raking up the foreign currency and using that to prop up the military, keep his prisons open, and suppress and repress the Cuban people.

Mr. Speaker, we are in a place in history here where I am glad to see that the Trump administration understands what needs to happen in Cuba. I am hopeful the Cuban people have enough of that spirit left in them to understand what they need to do. Mourn for Fidel is not what they need to do, but replace him with a leader of, by, and for the Cuban people, and a constitution that protects the individual interest and rights of the Cuban people is what needs to happen.

I fully support the effort of the free-minded and free-spirited Cuban people to one day also be free, all 11 million of them. Mr. Speaker, I will do my best to stay in shape so I can swim ashore and wade out onto a free Cuba.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DEFazio (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today after 5 p.m. and December 2 on account of medical appointment.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 2971. An act to authorize the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 4419. An act to update the financial disclosure requirements for judges of the District of Columbia courts and to make other improvements to the District of Columbia courts.

H.R. 5785. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for an annuity supplement for certain air traffic controllers.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on December 1, 2016, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 4665. To require the Secretary of Commerce to conduct an assessment and analysis of the outdoor recreation economy of the United States, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 55 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, December 2, 2016, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

7689. A letter from the Alternate OSD FRLO, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — DoD Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP) [Docket ID: DOD-2013-OS-0230] (RIN: 0790-AJ16) received November 28, 2016, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

7690. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Office of the Secretary, Department of Housing